

preservation issues

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

NEWS FOR THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

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The School House B&B

... or how two St. Louis suburbanites surprised themselves by adapting wholeheartedly to life and a bed and breakfast business in the former Rocheport School. Now they never want to leave.

Only the echoes of children's voices remained when John and Vicki Ott first saw the "For Sale" sign at the Rocheport School. The 1914 building, long empty of students, was one of many small town schools that were forced to close due to changes in educational philosophy; they were unable to offer the modern amenities believed necessary for a good education.

The Ott's were not among the students who for more than 60 years had been summoned to school by the cupola bell, read Virgil in the classrooms, and played marbles against the stone foundation, but they were nonetheless captivated by the building and its history.

Both John and Vicki were products of suburban South St. Louis County who left to attend the University of Missouri-Columbia and never returned. They didn't actually meet, however, until after college graduation when they were working in Columbia — John sell-

ing advertising for a local radio station and Vicki managing a book store.

Both Ott's had become antique "hounds" while in college and had, in fact, discovered the nearby town of Rocheport on antiquing expeditions. And, although both owned new houses in Columbia, they had come to appreciate the special qualities unique to historic buildings.

They had decided prior to their marriage, in October 1986, that they wanted to live in a historic place — something "unique." However, John's idea of unique was a warehouse or commercial building, while Vicki yearned for a quaint country cottage. So when they discovered the Rocheport School was for sale, Vicki did not share John's enthusiasm. "It was too big," she says, "I couldn't imagine the two of us living in something that big. The building seemed to be in sound structural condition but everything else

was wrong. There was cracked and falling plaster everywhere, the windows were rotted, the plumbing and electrical system were antiquated, multiple layers of lead-based paint covered every surface, and worst of all, the stone

(See SCHOOL HOUSE, page 4)



PHOTO BY GILBERT RUD

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May/June 1994

Historic Preservation Grants Available Soon

Deputy
State
Historic
Preservation
Officer

The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) is pleased to announce the beginning of the fiscal year 1995 grant cycle for Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants. The HPP will be awarding matching grants to citizens, organizations, local governments, and other qualified entities to help identify, evaluate, and protect Missouri's historic and archaeological resources.

In FY '95 both "survey and planning" and "pre-development" or "development" grants will be awarded. Eligible survey and planning activities

include surveys, nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, planning, and promotional or educational activities. Pre-development activities include the preparation of architectural plans and specifications, feasibility studies, and historic structures reports for properties listed in the National Register. Development involves actual construction.

Applications will be judged competitively according to criteria established in conformance with the HPP's statewide preservation planning process. Grant priorities for FY '95 were published in the March/April edition of *Preservation Issues*. In FY '95, special consideration will be given to projects

addressing the themes of ethnic heritage, transportation, agriculture, and women's history.

Grant application packets will be available on July 15, 1994; applications must be postmarked or delivered by 5 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 31. To request an application, call Nancy Faerber at (314) 751-7858.

The amount of HPP's Historic Preservation Fund allocation will not be known until Congress approves the federal budget, probably in the fall. Final grant availability will be contingent upon notification by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, of Missouri's FY '95 HPF appropriation. — *Claire Blackwell*

B&B Opportunities Offered by the Missouri Historic Preservation Revolving Fund

Historic
Preservation
Revolving
Fund

The Academy in Ste. Genevieve, located high atop a hill overlooking the downtown, is a National Historic Landmark. The original two-story stone section, ca 1808-1810, may be the oldest school building remaining west of the Mississippi River.

Built in the Federal style common to the period with dramatic "crown stepped" parapet walls extending above the roofline, the oldest section of the building is two-stories, one room deep, with a wide central hall. All four main rooms feature large 12-over-12 windows that flood the rooms with natural light. Four fireplaces with elegantly simple wooden mantels, hardwood floors, brick hearths, and graceful staircase also remain. The upstairs hall features a door that opens onto the roof of the front porch. (See page 7, Federal.)

The rear brick addition was added in the 1850s. The building has a full basement underneath with brick or concrete floors. An outside entrance to the basement allows this space to be used for a separate function.

The use of the property will be determined by the new owners, not the revolving fund.

The only requirement is that the property's historic character be preserved according to the covenants attached. This makes a number of uses feasible, including bed and breakfast (B&B), antique shop, restaurant/catering

business, residence, or a combination of several uses. Upstairs, as many as five guest rooms with separate baths may be possible, leaving room for an owner's suite and kitchen, dining room, parlor and central hall on the main floor. The basement could be used for children's rooms and play space, an



PHOTO JANE BETREM

The Ste. Genevieve Academy, ca 1808-1810, may be the nation's oldest school building west of the Mississippi.

antique shop, or spacious workroom.

The location of the property, only three blocks from the downtown area, plus the layout of the 4,700 square feet of space, makes use as a B&B easily possible. Prominently placed at the corners of Washington and Fifth streets, the lot is more or less rectangular in shape, 210 feet X 164 feet. Ste. Genevieve is approximately one hour south of St. Louis on Interstate 55.

Ste. Genevieve's National Landmark Historic District contains the largest surviving group of French vernacular buildings in the country. The historic character of the town is also evident in the numerous German-influenced and Victorian Era buildings. In Missouri's oldest town, residents prefer a quiet, easy-going lifestyle. The atmosphere in this town of approximately 5,000 people is attractive to tourists and to new residents alike. Magazine articles help draw tourists to the numerous annual festivals or for quiet weekend visits. Several new B&Bs have opened recently to meet the increased demand for overnight accommodations within the historic district.

The current asking price is \$55,000. Interested parties should contact the revolving fund regarding the possibility of financing some or all of the purchase price. Rehabilitation expenses may be partially offset by a 20 percent federal tax credit.

How about a hotel on the Katy Trail State Park? The Commercial Hotel in Boonville, also known as the Ballentine House, 409 E. High Street, was built in several sections between the late 1820s and the 1890s. A steady evolution of architectural styles is evident in its architecture. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel once served as a tavern or inn for travelers on the Santa Fe Trail.

The property now awaits a new owner to develop its over 7,400 square feet of space. On a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, the hotel is less than one block from the current and proposed new bridge bringing Katy Trail users in front of the property on their

way to the nearby Katy Depot. The hotel sits at the edge of downtown Boonville, which has just completed \$1 million in streetscape improvements as part of its Main Street Program. Just 25 minutes west of Columbia, many uses, such as a B&B, or mixed residential and commercial use, are possible for this unique structure. A federal tax credit of 20 percent is available for rehabilitation for income-producing use.

The hotel currently has 29 rooms; additions may be permitted under the terms of the preservation covenants. Subdivision or combination of rooms may also be needed to incorporate new bathrooms and service areas. Development of this property may be accomplished in phases, since the property was built in phases with three doors opening onto High Street. This division

of space also makes use of the property for multiple functions easily attainable.

The Revolving Fund has invested \$65,000 to date in stabilizing the property and has used this figure to establish the asking price. Interested parties should contact the revolving fund regarding the possibility of financing some or all of the purchase price.

Contact Revolving Fund Coordinator Jane Beetem, (314) 751-5373 for more information or to arrange to see the property. Missouri's Historic Preservation Revolving Fund is administered by the Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Program. Preservation covenants are attached to all revolving fund properties to ensure that future owners maintain the property's historic character. —Jane Beetem.



PHOTO NICK DECKER

The Commercial Hotel in Boonville, ca 1820-1890, illustrates several popular building styles on the Missouri frontier (see Federal Style, page 7).

Information Wanted

The National Park Service (NPS) is developing a mailing list of those colleges and universities in the United States that offer at least one course in a historic preservation or cultural resource management topic but do not offer a full degree in that subject. When developed, the mailing list will be used by NPS to transmit notices regarding the availability of technical preservation publications.

To provide information or to learn more, contact Emogene Bevitt or Heather Minor, NPS, Preservation Assistance Division, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, phone (202) 343-9561 or FAX (202) 343-3802.



Upper left, sunlight from the historic glass doors and transoms floods the original, wide central hallway. Right, the "common" room is a well-preserved original classroom complete with slate blackboard. Left, Mackenzie Ott takes a break from entertaining guests.

Photos this page and opposite left from The Romance of Country Inns by Gail Greco. Photographer, Tom Bagley.

(SCHOOL HOUSE, from Page 1)

basement walls were covered with mold. The smell was unbelievable."

But John's persistence (or superior salesmanship) prevailed. They pooled the profits from the sale of their Columbia houses and bought the school in January 1988. They soon learned that everything the building needed to make it livable was very expensive, and after they were turned down by local banks for a home improvement loan, they decided to tackle the job themselves. After months of after-work and weekend rehabbing, often joined by neighbors who dropped in out of curiosity and stayed to spackle, a friend suggested they might be eligible for a commercial loan.

After considering various options, they decided that a bed and breakfast

(B&B) was the most feasible commercial use, and one that would allow Vicki to stay at home and raise the family they both wanted. They developed a marketing package for their new B&B and made the rounds of area banks. Loans totaling \$100,000 from a local bank and the Small Business Administration, plus a 20 percent federal tax credit for the rehabilitation of a building listed in the National Register, made their dream a reality.

Although she had no architectural or building experience, Vicki had a clear vision of what she wanted. She drew up the initial plans for the project and acted as general contractor. The crafts and trades people she hired resented her supervision at first, especially when she arrived with a level and T-square to in-

spect their work, but her perfectionism soon won their respect and admiration.

The School House Bed and Breakfast opened for business in the spring of 1988. The wide central hall and one of the four large classrooms was rehabbed intact; the classroom with its slate blackboard on one end and open kitchen on the other serves as a common room for guests and a reminder of the building's origins. Three other classrooms on the first and second floors were subdivided to create nine guest rooms, seven with private baths. The attic serves as a manager's suite, and the basement (completed in a later phase) houses an office, laundry room, and White Horse Antiques.

The business has been very successful with yearly increases in profits.



The "bridal" suite (right) is a favorite with guests. All of the guest rooms are furnished with antiques in a variety of styles. The view from a first floor guest room (left) includes a ca 1861 Greek Revival church.

"Our location in Rocheport has allows us to offer guests a whole vacation package that other B&Bs can't match." Vicki Ott

Vicki believes their success has been good for Rocheport and vice versa. "When we opened," she says, "there were three antique shops in Rocheport, the Le Bourgeois Winery was just getting started, and the Katy Trail State Park a dream. I think our B&B gave others the courage to buy and restore property here and to risk opening a business." Today the tiny 19th century Missouri River town is experiencing an economic boom period it hasn't seen since the arrival of the railroad. Numerous buildings have been rehabbed (six by the Ottos), more than 20 new businesses have opened, and property values have more than doubled. Also, the first (and what Vicki believes is "the most beautiful") section of the trail was opened to hikers and bikers.

"Location is the key to any business success," said Vicki. "Our location in Rocheport has allowed us to offer guests a whole vacation package that other B&Bs can't match." Many visitors apparently agree. Vicki believes word-of-mouth is their most important form of advertising. Feature stories in

dozens of Missouri and national publications haven't hurt either: the **Chicago Sun Times**, **Recommended Bed and Breakfasts of the Midwest**, the **AAA Midwest Motorist**, **Midwest Living**, **St. Louis Magazine**, and Gail Greco's recent book, **The Romance of Country Inns**, among others.

The Ottos, (in their 30s) are atypical innkeepers. The typical innkeeper is retired or near retirement age with no children still at home and uses the profit from the B&B to supplement retirement income. The Ottos, with two young children, Mackenzie, four and (John) Tanner, two, are daily confronted with the unusual challenge of raising children and catering to guests at the same time in the same space. "Inconsistent discipline is the worst problem," said Vicki, "I tend to give in to the children's demands when I'm busy with guests and say no when I have more time to deal with them. But mostly the children haven't been a problem; about 95 percent of the guests really seem to enjoy them. Many are older couples who become surrogate grandparents and con-

tinue to send them cards and gifts after they visit."

Six years after the grand opening of the School House B&B, Vicki says she has no regrets and would do the same thing all over again. She also gives this advice and encouragement to would-be innkeepers: "You have to have the kind of people-oriented personality necessary to succeed in the service industry. An innkeeper has to enjoy coddling, pampering, and taking care of the guests' every need. If you resent taking care of adults, your guests will know it, and they won't come back."

"There are many rewards in the B&B business, but money isn't one of them; even the most successful are not big money makers. The most important rewards are having the company of interesting people from all over the country and being able to afford living in a great historic building." - **Karen Grace**

The School House Bed and Breakfast is located at Third and Clark streets in the Rocheport National Register Historic District.

More "Butter and Egg" Money for Your Bed and Breakfast

Not so many years ago, enterprising families sold butter and eggs to pay for incidentals or small luxuries. Although the term "butter and egg" money is seldom used today, the importance of maintaining cash flow in a home or small business is no less important now than it was then.

"Making money" can be as simple as not spending money. So it is with utility bills. "Utility cost avoidance" is a term that means lowering energy costs by managing your utilities more efficiently. And the costs you avoid can be your "butter and egg" money for other priorities.

As a bed and breakfast (B&B) owner, the comfort of your guests and the quality of their B&B experience is most important to you. The good news is you can reduce energy costs without sacrificing historic integrity and ambiance. Often, in fact, taking these steps will actually increase your guests' comfort.

Efficient heating, cooling, water heating and lighting can all reduce your energy costs. While your guests may look at your home with an eye for its beauty, you must look at it with an eye for its efficiency. Once you have heated or cooled an area, you can save money by ensuring that the "conditioned" air is not lost, forcing you to heat or cool the area again.

You must look for more in the attic than unique artifacts from the past. Insulation should have a value of R-38; ventilation should be a minimum of one square foot for every 100 square feet of attic space; and openings into the attic should be sealed to prevent the air you conditioned below from escaping to the attic. Simply sealing these openings can lower your heating/cooling bills as much as 25 percent.

Leave it to your guests to admire the workmanship of yesteryear on the exterior walls of the house. You should

be looking for ways to add insulation. If needed, a professional insulation contractor can be called in to review your situation and make recommendations.

Are you throwing your energy dollars out of those beautiful leaded glass windows? You are if they are allowing air in from the outside. But don't replace them. Keep the charm and improve the energy savings by installing inside storm windows, weatherstripping, and caulking around the interior casing. Add to the charm by letting the sunshine stream unobstructed through south-facing windows on sunny winter days.

Excessive moisture in your home can lower the quality of indoor air, increase bacteria growth, and wreck havoc on your guests with allergies. To reduce the moisture, install plastic over the dirt in the crawl space and insulate the stone, concrete, or brick foundation and between floor joists. A bonus to you is that reducing moisture cuts down on the time your air conditioner must run in summer.

That fireplace may be beautiful, but it is also a hole that robs the house of heat. Seal the fireplace with a removable plug when it's not in use.

Your guests probably never see the boiler, furnace or air conditioner in your home. They don't have to see it to know whether it's working properly. Make sure it is by having it inspected, cleaned and tuned annually. That inspection can reduce your heating and cooling costs by as much as 12 percent.

When it's time to replace the units, ask your utility or a professional heating/cooling contractor for an analysis of your utility bills. It may be cost-effective to invest in a higher efficiency unit, even though your up-front costs may be more.

Finally, you can cut your lighting costs by installing compact fluorescent bulbs in as many lighting fixtures as

you can. Because they produce a quality of light equal to or better than incandescents, your guests will enjoy the difference, if they notice it at all.

Energy efficiency can improve the comfort and atmosphere of your home. It can also put more "butter and egg" money in your pocket!

For more information about energy efficiency in buildings, contact Chris Buckland or Howard Hufford at (314) 751-4000. — *Chris Buckland and Howard Hufford*.

The authors are employed by the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Energy.

Chris Buckland is an energy officer with the division's residential outreach section. His duties include providing energy technical assistance to home owners for retrofitting equipment and techniques and for new construction.

Howard Hufford is a registered professional engineer. An avocational historian and preservationist as well as an energy engineer, Hufford lives in an 1870 house heated by passive solar energy.

For a free copy of **Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings** by Baird M. Smith, AIA, call Karen Grace, editor, at (314) 751-7959, or write to the return address.

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Editor: Karen Grace

MISSOURI

Historic Architecture

Federal Style Houses 1810-1840

Characteristics:

- I-house plan with center hallway is the most prevalent; symmetrical facades have three or five bays and are one-or two-stories. Hall and parlor cottages are also common.
- Most are red brick laid in Flemish bond, but log or stone examples are also seen. Early "soft brick" versions were often painted or parged (plastered) for protection.
- Roofs are side-gabled with the eaves flush with the gable ends; roofing material was commonly split wood shake, later replaced by terne metal standing-seam.
- Chimneys are seen in a variety of types and styles: interior single or double; exterior gable-end, single or single with crow-stepped parapet; double or double French-T.
- Gable ends (especially in urban settings) are often without windows or sometimes one or two small windows at the attic level.
- Windows are single, multi-light, single-hung sash: six-over-six, nine-over-six, or 12-over-12; wooden, louvered shutters were common.
- Window lintels are flat, flat with keystone, or segmentally arched in brick, stone, or a combination.
- Primary entry doors may be single- or double-leaf six-, eight-, or nine-panel "Christian"; transoms are nearly always present and may be flat, round-arched, or elliptical fanlights; fluted architraves with bulls-eye corner blocks are common in the more elaborate examples.
- Urban row or town houses in the style sometimes have second-story doors opening out to wooden or iron balcony.
- Molded cornices are also common.



In no other state does it appear . . . that the tavern has played such [an] important part." (Walter B. Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri, I)
Missouri's first state legislature met in a tavern, and the state's first constitution was drafted in a tavern.

The Gardner House tavern (or inn), ca 1828, in Palmyra is an unusual six bays wide but is otherwise typical of the Missouri Federal style seen in rural areas of the state. The role of taverns in the political history of Missouri has evoked a generalization that "... the Missouri tavern was the center of public affairs during those pioneer decades.

Preserving Your Historic B&B and Making It Accessible for People with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law on July 26, 1990, extends comprehensive civil rights to individuals with disabilities - both mental and physical. The main thrust of the law is the elimination of barriers to accessibility. The ADA currently benefits more than 43 million disabled individuals as well as an increasingly large elderly population.

Generally, historic properties, including buildings, sites, and landscapes, are not exempt from the ADA and must comply with its regulations. The only properties that are exempt from the law are religious entities, private clubs, private residences, and bed and breakfasts - if they have less than five sleeping rooms and the owner occupies the building.

The law does, however, contain some special provisions for historic properties. Properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and designated local landmarks that, in the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), cannot be made physically accessible without threatening their significance, may be subject to alternative rules.

If the SHPO determines that compliance with the full accessibility requirements would "threaten or destroy" the property's significance, the following alternative minimum requirements may be used: one accessible route must be provided from a site access point to an accessible entrance; directional signage must be provided; if toilets are provided, only one unisex toilet must be accessible; public spaces on the level of the accessible entrance must be accessible; and signs should be located where they can be seen by a seated person.

To encourage voluntary ADA compliance, under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code, businesses with fewer than 30 employees or gross receipts of less than \$1,000,000 may take a tax credit equal to 50 percent of qualified

(See ADA, Page 8)

Missouri SOS Needs Volunteers

S^tave Outdoor Sculpture (SOS) is a national organization dedicated to locating and surveying all publicly accessible outdoor sculpture and raising awareness about the value and need for care of such works.

The Missouri SOS effort is being coordinated by the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. It will be the first statewide survey of outdoor sculpture and will include both contemporary and historic sculptures, veteran and war memorials, earthworks, liturgical sculptures, and folk art.

Volunteers, individuals or organizations, are needed in all regions of the state. Call Marie Nau at (314) 882-3591 or FAX (314) 884-4039.

B&B Facts of Interest

- There are currently more than 300 B&Bs in Missouri.
- Two-thirds of Missouri's B&Bs are housed in historic (more than 50 years old) buildings.
- Fewer than one-third are housed in newer buildings.
- Slightly more than one-third of the total number are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Seven-and-one-half percent are located in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Springfield; the remaining 92 percent are in smaller towns or rural areas.

Dates to Remember

Oregon Trail Conestoga Days, May 7-8, at the Alexander Majors House in Kansas City. Call (816) 333-5556.

National Preservation Week, May 8-14. This year's theme is: It's Your Memory. It's Our History. It's Worth Saving. Plan now for local events.

Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation quarterly meeting, May 13, Poplar Bluff. Call (314) 751-5365 for more information.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Leadership Training, June 4-11, Saratoga Springs, New York. Call (202) 673-4067.

Architectural Bus Tour of St. Joseph, June 11, focuses on the work of Eckel & Mann. For more information, call: Missouri Valley Chapter of Architectural Historians at (816) 235-1726.

Santa Fe Trail Craft Show, June 11, at the Alexander Majors House in Kansas City. Call (816) 333-5556 for information.

"Reclaiming Women's History Through Historic Preservation," first national conference June 17-19, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa. For more information, call Gayle Samuels at (215) 527-4470.

Great American Home Awards contest deadline June 30. Call (202) 673-4283 for entry forms. Contest limited to single-family historic homes.

(ADA, from Page 7)

expenditures between \$250 and \$10,250 for making modifications that meet ADA guidelines. — *Karen Grace*

The following pamphlets are available free of charge from the Historic Preservation Program (HPP):

"Preserving the Past and Making it Accessible for People with Disabilities"

"Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character"

Call (314) 751-7959 or write to the HPP at the return address for your copy.

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